VIII

ANNUAL REPORT

ON

LABOUR IMMIGRATION INTO ASSAM

FOR THE

Year 1880.

SHILLONG:
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1881.

No. 2,636.

FROM C. J. LYALL, ESQ., C.I.E.,

Offg. Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam,

TO THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA,

REVENUE AND AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMEMT.

Dated Shillong, the 1st November 1881.

GENERAL DEPARTMENT.

SIR,

I AM directed to submit the Report on Labour Immigration into Assam for the year 1880, and to express the Chief Commissioner's regret for the great delay which has occurred in its submission. This was due mainly to the late receipt of the district reports from the office of the Commissioner of the Assam Valley Districts, where they had been detained for the report from Kámrúp.

2. The percentages of deaths and desertions have been calculated on the same principle as last year, which is that described in your letter No. 97, dated the 17th May 1880.

A few minor alterations have been introduced in the form of the report. Some additional statements have been embodied in Chapters II. & IV., *viz.*, those at paragraphs 35, 42, 49, 67, 93, and 96, and, as the statements in Chapter II. now embody all the district details formerly given in Chapter III., the latter chapter has been exclusively confined to details of unhealthy gardens. The mortality of children and infants is dealt with after the mortality of adults, and births are separately treated.

I have the honour to be,

SIR,

Your most obedient Servant,

Offg. Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam.

A. S Press (Revenue) No. 44—120—3-11-81]

REPORT ON LABOUR IMMIGRATION INTO ASSAM FOR THE YEAR 1880.

CHAPTER I.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION.

SECTION I.—IMPORTATION AND JOURNEY TO DESTINATION.

The appointment of a Commission to amend Act VII. of 1873 (B.C.)

THE most important event of the year has been the general re-consideration of the law regulating immigration and the relations between employers and labourers in the tea districts (Act VII. [B.C.] of 1873).

2. On the 6th April 1880, the Chief Commissioner was addressed by the Chairman of the Indian Tea Districts Association (an Association formed in London of gentlemen interested in the Indian tea industry), who forwarded a Memorial addressed to the Governor-General of India in Council, praying that some measures might be taken to improve the position of the tea industry by the amendment of Act VII. (B.C.) of 1873.

3. The Memorial, while stating in general terms the nature of the objections to the present Labour Law, did not criticise the law in detail or make many specific recommendations for its amendment. The Chief Commissioner therefore thought it desirable to call for the opinions of District Officers, directing them also to invite the Managers of tea-gardens in their districts to give their views on the subject. At the same time, the Memorial of the Indian Tea Districts Association was forwarded* to the Government of India, with a report on the steps which had been taken by the Chief Commissioner. That Government, in reply, suggested that the general question of the promotion of immigration into Assam might be considered at the same time as the question of the amendment of Act VII. (B.C.) of 1873, and proposed that a Commission should be appointed to deal with both of these questions. To this proposal, however, the Chief Commissioner demurred, thinking that to combine the consideration of the specific amendments necessary in the Immigration and Labour Law with that of the larger question of the encouragement of the settlement of agriculturists in the Province (in promoting which he doubted whether Government could legitimately or successfully take action) would delay unreasonably the introduction of the former. He, therefore, urged that the Commission should confine their attention to the concrete questions of the improvement of the existing law.

* From the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, to the Secretary to the Government of India, No. 994, dated the 17th May 1880.

† No. 122, dated the 24th June 1880, from Secretary to the Government of India, to the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam.

4. The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, who had also been addressed, expressed similar views in his Secretary's letter No. 2151., dated the 12th July 1880, to the Government of India. That Government, on the 18th October 1880, approved and sanctioned the appointment of a Commission to enquire into the working of Act VII. (B.C.) of 1873. The Commission was constituted accordingly, and commenced its sittings at Calcutta on the 20th December 1880. It consisted of the following members:—

MR. A. MACKENZIE, Secretary, Government of Bengal, President.
" W. AITCHISON, Manager of the Doloo Tea-garden, Cachar.
" H. F. BROWN, representing Messrs. Schœne, Kilburn, & Co.
DR. J. G. G. GRANT, Superintendent of Emigration, Bengal.
MR. L. HARE, Assistant-Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam.
" A. B. INGLIS, representing Messrs. Begg, Dunlop, & Co.
" A. WILSON, " " Jardine, Skinner, & Co.

5. The opinions collected locally were laid before the Commission, as well as the recommendations of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal and those of the Chief Commissioner, and after successive meetings the Commission submitted its final report, with a draft Bill embodying the amendments proposed in the law, on the 20th January 1881.

6. This draft Bill was laid before the Government of India by the Government of Bengal in a letter which expressed the joint views of Sir Ashley Eden and Sir Steuart Bayley, and it has now been decided to take up the revision of Act VII. (B.C.) of 1873

in the Legislative Council of the Governor-General. A Bill, based generally on the lines of the draft framed by the Commission, has been prepared and introduced, and will, it is hoped, very shortly become law. This Bill is now before the public, and it is unnecessary here to recount in detail the alterations which it proposes.

Importation and journey to destination.

7. Separate reports on immigration and the journey of labourers to their destination in the tea districts are submitted by the Superintendent of Emigration in Bengal and by the Deputy-Commissioner of Goálpára, who is Superintendent of Emigration through Dhubri, and it is unnecessary, therefore, to treat of these subjects in this place. It will suffice to say that the popularity of the Dhubri route continues, and that the proportion of immigrants for the Assam Valley travelling by it, as compared with the number embarking at Goalundo, was in 1880-81 68·4 per cent., or more than two-thirds of the whole number.

Inferior type of coolies.

8. The correspondence which had been maintained for some time* on the subject of the importation of an inferior type of coolies was brought to a close by letter No 221, dated the 18th November 1880, from the Government of India to the Government of Bengal, in which the opinion was expressed that the medical examination of emigrants previous to their embarkation for the tea districts had not always been as thorough as was required by the Act. The general question how far this medical examination ought to extend was left for the consideration of the Commission who dealt with the amendment of the Act. The Commissioners, in their report, proposed that an examination as to fitness to labour should only be made at the request of the employer, and that ordinarily the medical examination should determine only the question of fitness to travel to the labouring districts. This is the basis on which such examination proceeds in the case of colonial emigration, it being left to the Agents who select coolies for employment in the colonies to choose such persons as are suited to the work which they will be required to perform.

Change of form of contract of engagement.

9. A minor alteration was introduced into the form of contract of coolies engaged under Act VII. (B.C.) 1873 by the addition of the name of the proprietor of the garden for which the coolie is engaged. This was considered desirable, in order to guard against the possible transfer of a coolie from the garden of one proprietor to that of another without his consent.

Prohibition against recruiting coolies in Madras.

10. In the course of the year, a letter (No. 444, dated the 23rd March 1880) was received from the Government of Madras, in which enquiries were made regarding the mortality among coolies imported into the Province from Madras.

11. By an order dated the 16th October 1867, the Protector of Emigrants and the several Protectors of Labourers in the Madras Presidency were forbidden to grant licenses to contractors or recruiters for the purpose of engaging labourers for the tea districts in Bengal under Madras Act V. of 1866. The importation of Madrasis to the tea districts in Assam did not, however, cease in consequence of this order. The returns of tea labourers in this Province show that a considerable number have from time to time been imported under the Immigration Act, VII. (B.C.) of 1873. These people probably visited Calcutta on other business without the aid of recruiters, and were there put under contract. On the present occasion, a firm of Agents in Calcutta having applied to the Protector of Emigrants at Madras for permission to send recruiters to work in that Presidency, that officer enquired of the Madras Government whether the order of the 16th October 1867 was still in force. The object of the Government of Madras in making the reference to the Chief Commissioner was to ascertain whether the severe mortality among coolies imported into the tea-gardens of Sylhet, which had occasioned the issue of the prohibition of 1867, still continued. The Chief Commissioner was able to reply that a great improvement had taken place, not only as regards Sylhet, but throughout the Province, and that, with the exception of the year of the Madras famine (1877), during which there had been considerable mortality among the Madrasi immigrants, the statistics for the Province showed that coolies from Madras were not unsuited for labour in Assam. Sir Steuart Bayley thought it probable that if recruiting were allowed to go on under the sanction of law and the supervision of Government officials in the districts of Madras, instead of being, as at present, forbidden there, a better class of labourer, and one more fitted to stand the climate of Assam, might be procured than is now introduced through the agency of the Calcutta recruiters from Madras. The Government of Madras did not, however, see fit to remove the prohibition against direct recruiting in that Presidency, which therefore still remains in force.

Improvement of communications and steamer service.

12. Since the close of 1880 a tramway has been opened from the river Feesta to the river Dharla, on the Kaunia-Dhubri route, which will save those who travel by it a day's march, and thus still further

* Vide Chapter I., paragraph 3 of last year's report.

diminish the risks of transit. Beyond Dhubri nothing has yet been accomplished for the establishment of a more rapid and efficient steamer service. The steps taken for this purpose were fully detailed in letter No. 2,720, dated the 18th August 1880, from the Chief Commissioner to the Government of India in the Home, Revenue, and Agricultural Department, from which it will be seen that financial and other difficulties have hitherto prevented the Government from coming to any conclusion on this subject. The steamer companies plying on the Brahmaputra have, however, reduced their fares* very considerably for the shorter journeys, and the orders recently issued by the Government of Bengal, dated the 3rd March 1881, under which the emigrants will be fed by the steamer companies while on board the steamers, instead of by the contractors, will, it is expected, lead to still further reduction in the cost of the journey.

* See Chapter I., paragraph 8 of last year's report

13. Continued care and attention have been paid to the sanitary arrangements on board steamers and in depôts throughout the year. All steamers proceeding up the Brahmaputra with emigrants have been carefully inspected. The improved system of water-supply on board the steamers has been in force throughout the year, and, so far as the returns collected by the Superintendent of Emigration at Dhubri show, immigrants travelling by steamer from Dhubri have been remarkably free from illness. The Chief Commissioner has not yet had an opportunity of seeing the returns of immigrants *viâ* Goalundo, but he believes that the same remarks also apply to these. Of 6,974 persons conveyed to the tea districts by steamer from Dhubri in the official year 1880-81, only 20 died, or ·28 per cent., while in the previous official year, out of 6,580 persons conveyed, 39 died, or ·59 per cent.

Sanitary arrangements at depôts and on steamers.

14. At Dhubri a good well was made during the year close to the depôts where coolies are lodged till they can be put on board the upward-bound steamers. In the official year 1880-81, out of 7,478 persons who stayed at the Dhubri depôts on their way to the tea districts, only 2 died, while in the previous year, out of 8,041 persons, 35 died. The quarantine and debarkation depôts throughout the Province were kept in an efficient state of repair during the year.

15. Little use was made of the land route during 1880, owing to the reduction already mentioned in the fares charged by steamers. Only 392 persons marched to the tea districts from Dhubri during the official year 1880-81, as against 1,419 in 1879-80 and 3,265 in 1878-79.

Marching by the land route in Assam Proper.

Four persons died on the way in 1880-81, against 3 in 1879-80. The Superintendent of Emigration at Dhubri reports that the form of way-bill which has been introduced for emigrants marching works satisfactorily. The average time actually taken to reach the tea districts from Dhubri by the steamer and land routes respectively is shown in the accompanying statement, furnished by the Superintendent of Emigration:—

	Kamrúp. Days	Darrang. Days.	Nowgong. Days.	Sibságar. Days.	Lakhimpur Days.
Route taken by land	9	14	18	21	...
" " steamer..	3	5	5	8	11

The emigrants who travel by land are said to arrive in a much better condition, and to be able to begin hard work sooner, than those who travel by steamer, so that the increased time spent on the land journey is not wholly a loss to the employer. But with the diminution of the cost of the journey by steamer, and the improvement in the health of the emigrants travelling by them, the land route is not likely to be much resorted to.

16. As was promised in last year's report (page 8, Chapter II. 4), an attempt has been made to register free immigration at Bhairab Bazar, in the Surmá Valley, and at the ferry across the Brahmaputra at Dhubri. 806 free coolies (*i.e.*, coolies not engaged under Act VII. of 1873, B.C.) passed through the contractors' depôts at Dhubri, but these can hardly be termed free immigrants, as most of them were under short-term contracts not made under the Act, and all of them were assisted to immigrate by employers. Of immigrants who were unassisted, only 13 were registered as having crossed the ferry at Dhubri. The Superintendent of Immigration at Dhubri is of opinion that a larger number must have crossed, but that they failed to declare themselves as immigrants to the toll-collectors.

Registration of free immigrants

At the Bhairab Bazar registration station no distinction was made between free immigrants and immigrants under Act VII., and the registration was very imperfect; whereas 3,772 persons engaged under the Act, *viz.*, 1,263 for Sylhet and 2,509 for Cachar, are known to have passed up during the year under report to Sylhet and Cachar, only 651 were registered at the river station in the nine months from the 1st April to the 30th December.

It is hoped that greater success may be obtained in future years.

SECTION II.—RELATING TO RESIDENCE WITHIN THE PROVINCE.

Special mortality.

17. There has been no very severe mortality this year among any class of coolies in this Province, such as occurred in 1877 among immigrants from Madras, and in 1878 among immigrants from the North-Western Provinces, Oudh, and Behar. On a few gardens there has been heavy and exceptional mortality, as will be seen by a perusal of Chapter III. of this report. Generally speaking, however, the health of all classes of emigrants has been good during the year. Further particulars of mortality will be found in Section IV. of Chapter II.

Recommendations of the Labour Commission.

18. A few subjects which had been taken into consideration during the year, before the proposal was made to appoint a Labour Commission, were subsequently referred to that Commission. Such were the question of making an assignment to the Assam Administration of a portion of the Labour Transport Fund, so as to avoid the necessity of a reference to the Government of Bengal whenever any expenditure has to be incurred in this Province. The Commission have recommended that the Government of India should determine the proportion of the Labour Transport Fund which should be assigned to Assam and Bengal respectively.

19. Another point, similarly transferred to the Labour Commission for consideration, was whether the capitation-fees paid by employers of labour should be reduced, or maintained at the present rate, and any surplus of the Labour Transport Fund, above the amount required for carrying out the Labour Laws, applied to the improvement of communications in and to this Province. In accordance with the general wish of employers, the Commission have recommended the former alternative.

Returns to be furnished by employers.

20. The question of returns to be furnished by employers is a subject which has not ceased to occupy the attention of the Chief Commissioner. Registers were prepared early in the year, and were circulated to a few employers of labour, who had consented to try the new system of nominal-rolls referred to at paragraph 13 of last year's Immigration Report. The registers were made as simple as possible, consistently with supplying all the information required by the Government of India. It was found that for this purpose no less than four nominal-roll registers, each containing 11 or 12 columns, would have to be maintained, *viz.*, one for Act-VII. coolies, one for non-Act adults, one for children, and one for infants, and it was proposed to keep the first two of these separately for men and women. Four supplementary registers, for registering births, deaths, imprisonments, and desertions, were also proposed, as it was thought that in practice they would much facilitate the preparation of the monthly reports which under the new system each manager would be required to furnish. The initial labour of entering the names of all the persons on a large estate was found to be very great, and deterred some employers, who had consented to try the system experimentally, from carrying it out completely. Only one manager has expressed himself very decidedly in favour of the new system. It will probably be necessary, should such a system be eventually adopted, to send a clerk well instructed in the new system to visit in turn each garden to see that the registers are properly made up, and that the new method is thoroughly understood by the garden clerks.

21. When once the new system has been started and got into working order, it will probably be found to be a great improvement on the old system. It will, however, entail an increased expenditure on establishments; but no estimate can as yet be formed on this subject. There would undoubtedly be much correspondence between the compiling office and tea-gardens. Besides the monthly corrections of the duplicate garden registers which would be maintained in the compiling office, special registers would have to be maintained in the district offices to facilitate the final compilation of the returns submitted to the Government of India. The information obtained would, however, be much more complete, and the District Officers would be immediately informed of any excessive mortality which might occur. Moreover, while at present the only information available on which to calculate percentages is the number of persons resident on gardens at the beginning, middle, and end of the year, it would, with the new form of returns, be known what was the number at the end of each month. The subject of the forms which the returns and registers should take was submitted to the Labour Act Commission for consideration, but nothing could be settled by that body, as it seemed probable that the present classification of labourers would have to be modified, if the proposal of the Commission, to place local agreement coolies under the Labour Act, were adopted; and until the final decision of the Government of India was known on this point it seemed a waste of labour to frame registers and returns which might prove to be unsuited to the classification eventually adopted. Pending the passing of the new law, which is now under the consideration of

the Government of India, no futher action has been taken in the matter by this Administration, and the former system continues unaltered.

Submission of returns from gardens on which no Act-VII coolies are employed.

22. The inconvenience which has been felt in previous years from the failure of gardens which do not employ Act-VII. coolies, and which are consequently not bound by the provisions of that Act, to submit returns, has again been experienced during the year. The draft Bill prepared by the Labour Commission has provided for the submission of returns by all gardens employing more than 50 immigrants, whether engaged under the Act or not, and the Government of India accordingly determined that it was unnecessary to pass any special Regulation dealing with this subject, as the Chief Commissioner had proposed.

Maintenance of registers showing wages earned.

23. Some inconvenience was experienced in the course of an enquiry into the causes of the unhealthiness of a garden in Cachar from the absence of any books showing the earnings of each coolie separately. The system on this garden, which is also followed on a few other gardens, is to pay the labourers at the end of each day for the work they have done in "tokens," which represent each a certain value, and which are cashed by the manager once a week, or sometimes once a month, on presentation. This system is generally popular with coolies, and saves some trouble to the managers. But as under this system no registers of individual earnings are maintained, and only the weekly or monthly earnings of the whole labouring force is entered in the garden accounts, it is clear that no enquiry can be held into the question whether a particular coolie or batch of coolies have earned sufficient to maintain them.

In the particular case to which reference is made, pay-books showing the earnings of each coolie were opened at the recommendation of the Committee of Enquiry. The new draft Bill now under consideration proposes to give the Local Government power to direct the maintenance of pay registers on all gardens.

Inspection of tea-gardens.

24. A table is annexed, showing the number of gardens which employ Act-VII. labourers, and of those which employ no such labourers, and the number of gardens of each of these classes which have been visited by inspecting officers once, twice, and thrice, respectively:—

Name of district.	Number of existing tea-gardens						Number of tea gardens visited once only in the year.						Number of tea-gardens visited twice in the year					
	Tea-gardens employing Act-VII. labourers, either exclusive of, or together with, other labourers.		Tea gardens not employing Act-VII labourers.		Total.		Tea gardens employing Act VII. labourers, either exclusive of, or together with, other labourers.		Tea-gardens not employing Act-VII. labourers.		Total		Tea gardens employing Act-VII labourers, either exclusive of, or together with, other labourers.		Tea-gardens not employing Act-VII. labourers.		Total.	
	1880	1879	1880	1879	1880	1879.	1880	1879	1880	1879	1880	1879	1880	1879	1880.	1879	1880	1879.
Sylhet	50	43	41	42	91	85	25	30	4	8	29	38	13	4	1	..	14	4
Cachar	100	129	84	52	184	181	84	82	29	23	113	105	11	26	2	2	13	28
Kámrúp	8	8	96	96	104	104	8	6			8	6	.	.		..	.	1
Darrang	64	63	60	60	124	123	3	3	..	..	3	3	60	48	..	.	60	48
Nowgong	33	30	44	101	77	131	30	7	.	.	30	7	3	15	..	..	3	15
Sibságar	147	143	117	73	264*	216	102	106	20	33	122	130	37	27	1	7	38	34
Lakhimpur	130	135	81	65	211	200	94	89	26	14	120	103	15	26	1	1	16	27
Total	532	551	523	489	1,055	1,040	346	329	79	78	425	406	139	141	5	10	144	151

Name of district	Number of tea gardens visited thrice in the year.						Number of tea-gardens not visited during the year.					
	Tea-gardens employing Act-VII labourers either exclusive of, or together with, other labourers.		Tea-gardens not employing Act-VII. labourers.		Total.		Tea-gardens employing Act-VII labourers, either exclusive of, or together with, other labourers.		Tea-gardens not employing Act-VII. labourers.		Total.	
	1880	1879	1880	1879.	1880	1879.	1880.	1879.	1880	1879	1880.	1879
Sylhet	2	7	....	....	2	7	10	2	36	34	46	36
Cachar	2	8	1	....	3	8	3	22	52	27	55	50
Kámrúp	....	....	....	....	....	..	....	2	96	96	96	98
Darrang	....	4	....	....	....	4	1	3	60	60	61	63
Nowgong	....	6	....	....	....	6	....	2	44	101	44	103
Sibságar	3	10	....	1	3	11	5	....	96	32	101	32
Lakhimpur	5	1	....	....	5	1	16	19	54	50	70	69
Total	12	31	1	1	13	32	35	51	438	400	473	451

* Including 12 coolie depôts.

25. It will be seen that the number of gardens employing Act-VII. coolies has decreased; there are now 532 such gardens compared with 551 last year. 346 of this class of gardens were visited once, 139 twice, and 12 three times, as against 328, 141, and 31 respectively in 1879, or a total of 660 visits paid in 1880 to 703 visits paid in 1879.

26. 523 gardens not employing Act-VII. coolies existed in 1880, against 489 in 1879. Of these, 79 were visited once, 5 twice, and 1 three times, against 78, 10, and 1 in 1879. There were thus 92 visits paid to these gardens in 1880, against 101 paid in 1879.

27. The large decrease in the number of gardens in Nowgong and the large increase in the number in Sibságar, as shown in the above statement, is due to a re-classification of gardens, and to the fact that out-gardens have been treated as one with, or distinct from, the parent garden, according as convenience has dictated. It is not due to a corresponding decrease or increase in the area occupied by the tea industry in these districts.

28. The number of gardens employing Act-VII. labourers which have remained unvisited in Cachar has fallen from 23 last year to 3 this year. In Sylhet there were 10 gardens of this class unvisited, but there has been no exceptionally high mortality on any garden in that district.

The absence on leave of the special Inspector for Upper Assam, Dr. Partridge, during half the year, has made it difficult to arrange for the inspection of all the gardens employing Act-VII. labourers in Lakhimpur and Sibságar; nevertheless, while 19 gardens remained unvisited in Upper Assam in 1879, there were only 22 unvisited in 1880.

CHAPTER II.

GENERAL STATISTICS.

SECTION I.—IMPORTATIONS.

Statistics of importation.

29. THE falling off in the number of imported coolies of all classes which was noticed in 1879 is again a feature of the year under report. The decrease has been principally among Act-VII. coolies, and among children and infants. The importations of non-Act adults do not show so great a decrease, but the children and infants accompanying their parents are less than half the number of 1879. A statement is given below, which shows the importations under each class for the last four years:—

		1880.	1879.	1878.	1877.
Act-VII.	Garden-sirdars	7,414	11,161	19,972	14,382
	Contractors	3,381	4,458	7,390	8,286
Non-Act	Adults	2,046	2,667	4,827	3,095
	Children	2,229	4,541	8,299	4,760
	Infants	843	1,885	2,573	1,874
	Total	15,913	24,712	43,061	31,897

30. The largest importations during this period occurred in 1878, and since then the numbers have rapidly decreased. The importations of 1879 were only 57 per cent. of those of 1878, and the importations of 1880 are only 64 per cent. of those of 1879. The importations of 1880 are only 36 per cent. of those of 1878.

Reasons for decrease.

31. The principal reasons alleged for this decrease are the depression of the tea industry, which has induced managers to reduce their establishments to the lowest possible point, the increased cost of imported labour, and the unwillingness of the coolies to emigrate, owing to the good harvests in the recruiting districts. Besides these causes, it is probable that the demand for tea-coolies was much relaxed, as, when no increase is being made in the area cultivated with tea, the number who sufficed for working the gardens last year should be sufficient this year also; and it must be remembered that the work done by permanently-engaged coolies is to a certain, and perhaps an increasing, extent supplemented by local labour. The disproportionate falling off in the number of children and infants imported may perhaps be explained by the hypothesis that the scarcity which occasioned an abnormal emigration in 1878, stimulated whole families to abandon their homes, and that in years of prosperity a smaller proportion of labourers bring their families with them.

The quality of the labourers imported may be assumed to have been satisfactory, as no complaints on this score, which had formerly been not uncommon, were made during the year.

Localities from which imported.

32. A comparative statement is given below, showing for 1879 and 1880 the localities from which the coolies were imported. In this table children and infants are omitted, and only adults entered :—

Nationality.		Act-VII.				Non-Act.		Total.	
		Garden-sirdars.		Contractors.					
		1880.	1879.	1880.	1879.	1880.	1879.	1880.	1879.
Bengal	Men	487	720	681	635	320	425	1,488	1,780
	Women	434	637	554	477	249	462	1,237	1,576
	Total	921	1,357	1,235	1,112	569	887	2,725	3,356
North-Western Provinces	Men	667	1,275	613	792	276	446	1,556	2,513
	Women	505	669	234	471	228	390	967	1,530
	Total	1,172	1,944	847	1,263	504	836	2,523	4,043
Chota Nagpur	Men	3,080	4,342	842	1,249	502	441	4,424	6,032
	Women	2,237	3,515	425	800	463	477	3,125	4,792
	Total	5,317	7,857	1,267	2,049	965	918	7,549	10,824
Nepal	Men	3	.....	10	5	.....	.....	13	5
	Women	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
	Total	3	.....	10	5	.....	.....	13	5
Madras	Men	1	3	17	17	3	9	21	29
	Women	.....	.....	5	12	5	17	10	29
	Total	1	3	22	29	8	26	31	58
Total	Men	4,238	6,340	2,163	2,698	1,101	1,321	7,502	10,359
	Women	3,176	4,821	1,218	1,760	945	1,346	5,339	7,927
Grand Total		7,414	11,161	3,381	4,458	2,046	2,667	12,841	18,286

As in former years, there were many more importations from Chota Nagpur than from other localities, and the largest proportionate falling off was in importations from the North-Western Provinces. Thus, while the general ratio of importations of adults was as 70 in 1880 to 100 in 1879, the ratio for Bengalis was 81 to 100, for Chota Nagpuris 69, and for coolies from the North-Western Provinces 62 to 100.

Proportion of men to women.

33. The proportion of women to men was slightly lower in 1880 than in 1879, being 71·1 and 76·4, respectively, to every 100 men. Comparing the proportion of women to men imported from the three principal localities, *viz.*, Bengal, Chota Nagpur, and the North-Western Provinces, it appears that, while 71·1 per cent. is the general proportion of women to men for all adult importations taken together, the percentage for each of the above localities is 83·1, 70·6, and 62·1, respectively, the percentage falling as the distance to be travelled increases.

Proportion of garden-sirdars' and contractors' importations.

34. The proportion of coolies imported by garden-sirdars to the total importations has fallen from 71·4 per cent. in 1879 to 68·6 per cent. in 1880. The reason for this decrease in the employment of garden-sirdars is not apparent. As compared with the number imported by contractors, the number imported by garden-sirdars was 100 to 40 in 1879 and 100 to 45 in 1880.

Importations to each district.

35. The following statement shows the number of persons of each class received by each district for the last two years. It will be seen that the districts of Sibságar and Lakhimpur imported by far the largest number of persons, and next to these two districts come Cachar and Darrang :—

Districts.	Act-VII.		Non-Act.						Total.	
			Adults.		Children.		Infants.			
	1880.	1879.	1880.	1879.	1880.	1879.	1880.	1879.	1880.	1879.
Sylhet	568	401	485	834	173	263	37	121	1,263	1,619
Cachar	1,526	3,077	411	422	456	749	116	210	2,509	4,458
Káurúp	48	134	68	249	43	176	19	61	178	620
Darrang	1,315	2,358	60	291	178	542	110	302	1,663	3,493
Nowgong	652	1,389	185	98	164	410	101	171	1,102	2,068
Sibságar	3,042	4,251	535	582	484	1,273	276	647	4,337	6,753
Lakhimpur	3,644	4,009	302	191	731	1,128	184	373	4,861	5,701
Total	10,795	15,619	2,046	2,667	2,229	4,541	843	1,885	15,913	24,712

SECTION II.—STATISTICS OF THE LABOUR FORCE IN THE PROVINCE.

36. The following table shows the changes which have taken place in the tea-garden population of the Province during the year:—

Total labour force and gains and losses.

Number remaining at end of 1879		184,825
Add new importations		15,913
Transfers from other gardens		6,905
Otherwise added		50,145
Total		257,789
Deduct deaths	6,657	
Desertions	5,142	
Otherwise	58,690	
		70,489
Balance at end of 1880		187,300

It may be observed that nearly all of those shown as "otherwise added" had in fact been previously employed on other gardens, and had left on expiry of their contracts, or by desertion, and taken service perhaps in another district or at a distance from their first garden, and so are not known to have come from other gardens. The term "received from other gardens" is generally confined to persons who have been transferred during the time of their agreement, or who are positively known to have come from another garden.

37. The losses from all causes during the year were 6,657 deaths, 5,142 desertions (among whom are included 397 children and 195 infants who left with their parents, but who are not in any legal sense deserters), and 58,690 otherwise deducted, *i.e.*, who left after expiry of their contract. This gives a total of 70,489 persons to be deducted. The number of persons at the end of the year was therefore 187,300, and the increase during the year amounts only to 2,475.

38. It is on this statement that the figures denoting "actual strength" are based. The number "received from other gardens" are omitted, as they would obviously be counted twice over if they were included, but the number "otherwise added" are almost all transfers of the same nature, and the inclusion of them swells the aggregate number of coolies unduly and lowers the percentages of deaths and desertions based thereon improperly. These percentages have been included in the present report, to facilitate comparison with past years, but will not be included in future. A sounder approximation to the true ratio (which cannot be obtained with mathematical accuracy for a fluctuating population without an amount of labour which would be altogether incommensurate with the result) is that based on the annual mean, which is obtained from the actual population on the 1st January, 1st July, and 31st December, and is thus worked out:—

Calculation of actual strength.

Calculation of annual strength percentages.

If A is taken to be = the strength on 1st January.
a = the events which happen in the first-half year.
B = the strength on 1st July.
b = the events in second-half year.
C = the strength on 31st December.

The annual percentage is then $x+y$,
where

$$\frac{A+B}{2} : a = 100 : x.$$

$$\frac{B+C}{2} : b = 100 : y.$$

In the calculation of percentage for births, however, the percentage is x,
where

$$\frac{\frac{A+B}{2}+\frac{B+C}{2}}{2} : a+b = 100 :$$

The returns furnished by District Officers do not separate the births in the returns into a and b, but only give the total births of the year.

Comparison of labour force for three years.

39. A table is given below which shows the total force at the beginning of each of the last three years and the end of the last year:—

Classes of labour.	1st January 1878.	1st January 1879.	1st January 1880.	1st July 1880.	Mean strength for first half year of 1880.	31st December 1880.	Mean strength for second half year of 1880.
Act-VII	46,765	49,930	44,372	41,013	42,692	37,405	39,209
Non-Act { Adults	63,813	70,865	76,941*	83,982	80,461	83,115	83,548
Non-Act { Children	27,854	36,343	41,161*	43,157	42,159	43,163	43,160
Non-Act { Infants	18,642	20,957	22,351*	22,781	22,566	23,617	23,199
Total	157,074	178,095	184,825*	190,933	187,879	187,300	189,116

* 76,383
* 41,025
* 22,324
* 184,194 } According to the returns for 31st December 1879. The difference is owing to Sylhet, where some of the tea-gardens which did not submit returns last year have submitted returns this year, and *vice versa*.

40. Notwithstanding the falling off in importations which has already been shown to have occurred in the last two years, the total coolie population, including children and infants, has not only not diminished but has slightly increased. If adults only are considered, the falling off has been only 275 since the year 1878 and 793 since the year 1879, and this has been to some extent compensated by the large increase in the number of children since 1878, *viz.*, 6,820. The increase shown under the head "Infants," *viz.*, 2,660, is of course non-effective as an addition to labouring power, but children are able to assist in the lighter work of a garden at an early age, and are therefore not an unimportant element in the labour force. On the other hand, the existence of children in a labourer's family tends to bind him to the locality of his labour, and to make him less desirous of returning to his home. The increase in their numbers is therefore a matter of congratulation, as tending to the permanent colonisation of the Province.

Labour force by sex and nationality.

41. The following table shows the sex and nationality of the adult population:—

Nationality.	Sex.	Act-VII.		Non-Act.		Total.	
		1880.	1879.	1880.	1879.	1880.	1879.
Bengal	Men	4,265	5,022	17,411	16,843	21,676	21,865
	Women	4,281	5,222	15,291	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
North-Western Provinces	Men	3,471	4,357	9,210	8,555	12,681	12,912
	Women	2,557	3,317	7,585	6,807	10,142	10,124
Chota Nagpur	Men	12,582	14,453	17,434	14,963	30,016	29,416
	Women	10,100	11,451	15,556	13,355	25,656	24,806
Nepal	Men	7	6	18	37	25	43
	Women	.....	.....	6	11	6	11
Madras	Men	89	341	366	300	455	641
	Women	53	166	233	207	286	373
Bombay	Men	.....	25	3	.....	3	25
	Women	.....	12	2	.....	2	12
Total	Men	20,414	24,204	44,442	40,698	64,856	64,902
	Women	16,991	20,168	38,673	35,685	55,664	55,853
Grand Total		37,405	44,372	83,115	76,383	120,520	120,755

The Chota Nagpur coolies have increased by 1,450 souls, while the Bengalis have decreased by 1,144 and the North-Western Provinces by 213. The general proportion of women to men was 85 per cent. in 1880, and 86 per cent. in 1879.

Compared with the percentage of women to men for the whole Province for 1880, the Bengalis have 90 per cent. of women, the North-Western Provinces 80 per cent., and the Chota Nagpuris 85.

This result is only what might have been expected from a consideration of the distance which each class has to travel before reaching Assam, those drawn from the nearest districts most willingly, and those coming from afar least willingly, bringing their women with them.

Mean strength district by district.

42. A statement is added which has not been given in former reports, which shows for each class of persons in each district the mean strength of each half year, figures which are used, as has been explained above, for the calculation of the annual percentages:—

Districts.	Act-VII.		Non-Act.						Total.*		Whole year.
			Adults.		Children.		Infants.				
	First half.	Second half.	First half.	Second half.	First half.	Second half.	First half.	Second half.	First half.	Second half.	
Sylhet	2,123	1,894	11,371	11,816	3,291	3,587	1,778	1,929	18,614	19,227	18,920
Cachar	8,004	6,831	29,397	29,582	19,449	19,599	5,413	5,334	62,263	61,347	61,805
Kámrúp	253	250	690	712	317	335	118	156	1,379	1,453	1,416
Darrang	5,197	4,927	8,274	5,467	2,008	2,122	1,712	1,857	14,242	14,373	14,307
Nowgong	2,369	2,271	1,494	1,665	1,947	1,132	429	503	5,340	5,672	5,506
Sibsagar	12,988	11,656	19,900	21,255	9,294	9,633	8,738	8,899	56,871	51,444	51,622
Lakhimpur	11,856	11,278	12,424	12,949	6,561	6,750	4,376	4,540	35,218	35,618	35,418
Total*	42,592	39,202	80,461	83,548	42,159	43,160	22,566	23,198	187,879	189,116	188,497

* These are calculated on the total strength in each district on the 1st January, 30th June, and 31st December, and do not agree exactly with the total strength of each class of labourers, in calculating which fractions have been left out of consideration.

SECTION III.—DESERTIONS.

Improvement of desertions.

43. The number of desertions of adults has fallen from 5,885 in 1879 to 4,550 in 1880, showing a decrease of 1,335, or 22·5 per cent.

For Act-VII. coolies, the percentage of desertions to annual strength is 4·14 in 1880, as compared with 6·20 in 1879: for non-Act coolies it is 3·48 in 1880 to 3·82 in 1879. The improvement under both classes is satisfactory, although the decrease under Act labourers is no doubt principally due to the smaller number imported, since desertions are naturally most numerous among newly-introduced coolies, who suffer most from the effects of climate and home-sickness.

Desertions by sex and nationality.

44. The following statement gives details of desertions according to nationality and sex:—

Nationality.	Sex.	Act-VII.		Non-Act.		Total.		Percentage of desertions among							
		Number of desertions.						Act-VII.				Non-Act.			
								1880.		1879.		1880.		1879.	
		1880.	1879.	1880.	1879.	1880.	1879.	Annual strength.	Actual strength.	Annual strength.	Actual strength.	Annual strength.	Actual strength.	Annual strength.	Actual strength.
Bengal	Men	277	472	557	526	834	998	6·09	4·43	7·80	5·13	3·11	3·62	3·06	[illegible]
	Women	95	193	321	324	416	517	2·01	1·51	3·11	2·18	2·07	1·62	2·15	1·56
North-Western Provinces	Men	453	822	721	700	1,174	1,522	11·71	7·98	17·05	11·85	7·95	5·34	7·02	8·02
	Women	135	248	406	369	541	617	4·70	2·33	6·84	5·06	5·51	3·85	5·54	3·63
Chota Nagpur	Men	582	909	509	593	1,091	1,502	4·22	3·13	6·05	4·54	3·92	2·13	4·01	2·76
	Women	149	279	267	360	416	639	1·35	1·05	2·38	1·81	1·78	1·31	2·78	1·97
Nepal	Men	2	2	4	4	6	6	20·00	10·52	40·00	20·00	12·63	8·88	10·80	7·49
	Women	..	..	1	1	1	1	..	..	..	..	12·50	7·69	9·09	7·14
Madras	Men	11	43	34	13	45	56	6·29	3·05	10·45	7·78	10·78	6·40	4·35	3·21
	Women	..	14	22	9	22	23	..	..	6·97	5·66	10·37	6·68	4·35	3·29
Bombay	Men	..	4	2	..	2	4	..	..	14·28	12·12	66·66	33·33	..	..
	Women	..	..	2	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	200·00	50·00	..	..
Total	Men	1,325	2,252	1,827	1,836	3,152	4,088	5·91	4·29	8·34	6·13	4·17	2·95	4·48	3·07
	Women	379	734	1,019	1,063	1,398	1,797	2·01	1·53	3·35	2·50	2·69	1·95	2·05	2·15
	Total	1,704	2,986	2,846	2,899	4,550	5,885	4·14	3·06	6·20	4·51	3·48	2·49	3·82	2·65

NOTE.—The percentages of deaths and desertions are calculated separately on the figures of each half-year. The mean of the strength at the beginning and end of each such period is taken for this purpose. The sum of these two percentages then forms the percentage of the year's return, and is called the annual percentage (Home, Revenue, and Agricultural Department Resolution No. 177, dated the 11th November 1879, paragraph 3, and Home, Revenue, and Agricultural Department letter No. 97, dated the 17th May 1880).

45. From the above, it will be seen that every class of Act-VII. coolies shows an improvement in respect of desertions, an improvement which is more particularly marked in the case of those from the North-Western Provinces, Oudh, and Behar. Among non-Act coolies there is no very material change as compared with 1879. There is a small falling off in the percentage of desertions of Chota Nagpur non-Act coolies, and some increase in the percentage of desertions of Nepal and Madras non-Act coolies, but the numbers of the desertions among these two classes are small; unlike last year, the Bengalis this year show a higher percentage of desertions than the Chota Nagpuris, both among the Act-VII. and non-Act coolies. The order in which the three principal nationalities stand this year in respect of the proportionate number of desertions is, first North-Western Provinces coolies, next Bengalis, and lastly Chota Nagpuris. As is always the case, the proportion of desertion is much smaller among women than among men.

Desertions district by district.

46. Considered district by district, the desertions occur as shown in the statement below:—

District.	Total desertions.		Act VII.		Non-Act.		Percentages of desertions among									
							Act-VII.				Non-Act.				Total adult population.	
							Actual strength.		Annual strength.		Actual strength.		Annual strength.		Annual strength.	
	1880	1879.	1880.	1879.	1880.	1879.	1880.	1879.	1880.	1879.	1880.	1879.	1880.	1879.	1880.	1879.
Sylhet	1,405	1,006	169	216	1,237	790	6·15	6·67	8·26	8·91	7·66	5·92	10·76	8·23	10·38	8·31
Cachar	1,524	2,379	505	1,277	1,019	1,502	4·81	8·31	6·76	15·13	2·30	3·23	3·44	5·03	4·10	6·88
Kámrúp ..	15	3	....	1	15	2	....	0·26	....	0·40	1·72	0·21	2·10	0·34	1·55	·34
Darrang ..	227	422	146	259	91	163	2·22	3·66	2·88	4·86	1·23	2·36	1·68	3·23	2·27	4·10
Nowgong ..	209	392	166	336	43	56	5·51	10·30	7·00	15·41	1·72	2·17	2·71	3·75	5·30	10·69
Sibságar ..	648	762	364	514	284	248	2·18	2·65	2·95	2·85	1·09	1·04	1·37	1·35	1·95	2·32
Lakhimpur.	511	521	354	383	157	138	2·25	2·12	3·06	2·97	·91	0·90	1·23	1·23	2·09	2·17
Total....	4,550	5,885	1,704	2,986	2,846	2,899	3·06	4·51	4·14	6·20	2·49	2·65	3·48	3·82	3·69	4·79

47. In every district except Sibságar and Lakhimpur considerable improvement is shown in the percentage of desertions of Act-VII. coolies to annual strength, and this improvement is particularly marked in the districts of Cachar and Nowgong. Among non-Act coolies, Sylhet and Kámrúp show an increase in the percentage of desertions to annual strength, Sibságar and Lakhimpur remain the same as last year, while Cachar, Darrang, and Nowgong show a considerable improvement. Sylhet is the only district in which the actual reported number of desertions has increased.

Order of demerit of districts in regard to desertions.

48. Taken in order of demerit, the following are the lists of districts for 1880 and 1879:—

1880. District.	per cent.	1879. District.	per cent.
Sylhet	10·38	Nowgong	10·69
Nowgong	5·30	Sylhet	8·31
Cachar	4·10	Cachar	6·88
Darrang	2·27	Darrang	4·10
Lakhimpur	2·09	Sibságar	2·32
Sibságar	1·96	Lakhimpur	2·17
Kámrúp	1·55	Kámrúp	·34

SECTION IV.—MORTALITY.

Improvement in mortality.

49. There were in 1880 6,657 deaths amongst all classes of persons employed on tea-gardens, including infants and children, as compared with 9,450 in 1879, or a decrease of 2,793, or 29·5 per cent. The following table shows the percentage of mortality according to annual strength for 1880 and 1879, with the data upon which these percentages are calculated, arranged so that the same half-year of each year may be contrasted. It will be observed that there is a very marked improvement in the health of the persons resident on tea-gardens, the percentage of mortality for 1880 being 3·52 and that for 1879 being 5·09. It will also be seen that in both cases the second half-year is, as might be expected from its seasonal conditions, the less healthy of the two :—

District.	Deaths.				Percentages.					
					Half-yearly.				Annual.	
	First half year.		Second half-year.		First half.		Second half.			
	1880.	1879.	1880.	1879.	1880.	1879.	1880.	1879.	1880.	1879.
Sylhet	175	280	235	337	·94	1·75	1·22	1·97	2·16	3·72
Cachar	919	1,089	741	1,486	1·47	1·66	1·20	2·32	2·67	3·98
Kámrúp	22	25	36	46	1·59	2·18	2·51	3·53	4·10	5·71
Darrang	282	456	406	705	1·98	3·43	2·83	4·93	4·81	8·36
Nowgong	100	251	182	196	1·87	5·25	3·20	3·83	5·07	9·08
Sibságar	846	1,215	1,182	1,483	1·66	2·47	2·30	2·95	3·96	5·42
Lakhimpur	705	884	826	997	2·00	2·61	2·32	2·88	4.32	5·49
Total	3,049	4,200	3,608	5,250	1·62	2·28	1·90	2·81	3·52	5·09

The improvement in the health of the imported labourers has, it will be seen, been general in all districts, and is not confined to a few districts only. It is more particularly marked in Nowgong, where the percentage has fallen from 9·08 to 5·07, and in Darrang, where it has fallen from 8·36 to 4·81.

Mortality among adults.

50. If the mortality among adults alone be considered, it will appear that in the present year there were 2,398 deaths among Act-VII. coolies, against 3,759 last year, and that the percentages according to annual strength for these years are 5·88 and 7·86 respectively. Among non-Act coolies there were in 1880 2,012 deaths, and in 1879 2,936; the percentages are respectively 2·45 and 3·86.

Taking all adults together, there were 4,410 deaths in 1880, against 6,695 in 1879, or 3·58 and 5·03 per cent. respectively. There is thus a great improvement in the health of both Act-VII. and non-Act adults; and the improvement is greater in the former class, where it was most needed. The recorded rate of mortality among tea-coolies is now no greater than the rate at which it is estimated that the population of India generally die under normal circumstances, or 35 per mille.

Mortality among adults by sex and nationality.

51. A table is given below, showing in detail for Act-VII. and non-Act adults the mortality according to nationality and sex. The proportion of deaths to annual strength is nearly the same for men and women. Considering the three chief nationalities, it will be seen that the North-Western Provinces coolies have the highest percentage of mortality, 4·67, the Chota Nagpur coolies are next, with 4·04 per cent. and the Bengalis last, with 2·34. Last year the Chota Nagpur coolies showed the highest mortality, with a percentage of 6·04, so that the improvement amongst this class in the present year is particularly marked.

Nationality.	Sex.	Deaths.		Percentages of deaths to annual strength.		Percentages of deaths to actual strength.	
		1880.	1879.	1880.	1879.	1880.	1879.
Bengal	Men	455	853	2·34	3·66	1·72	1·83
	Women	536	774				
North-Western Provinces	Men	643	971	4·67	4·67	3·22	3·55
	Women	443	728				
Chota Nagpur	Men	1,194	1,767	4·04	6·04	2·96	3·02
	Women	1,085	1,515				
Nepal	Men	5	.....	14·73	.....	7·79	.....
	Women	1	.....				
Madras	Men	33	53	5·42	7·31	3·30	3·65
	Women	13	22				
Bombay	Men	2	4	7·69	11·90	4·25	3·52
	Women	.....	1				
Total	Men	2,332	3,648	3·52	5·42	2·51	2·72
	Women	2,078	3,047	3·67	4·76	2·70	2·68
Men and women together		4,410	6,695	3·58	5·03	2·60	2·70

Order of demerit of districts in regard to mortality of adults.

52. The two statements given below show the order of the several districts of the Province in regard to mortality and their order in regard to the proportion of newly-imported coolies to the total labour force. The order of mortality is—

	1880.	1879.	1878.	1877.
Nowgong	5·83	9·22	11·09	7·15
Darrang	5·17	8·44	9·64	8·10
Lakhimpur	4·67	5·73	7·35	6·73
Kámrúp	4·18	4·15	4·79	6·20
Sibságar	3·89	5·38	7·72	6·90
Cachar	2·42	4·67	5·21	2·93
Sylhet	2·13	3·63	5·72	3·14

The order in which the districts stand according to the proportion of newly-imported to old coolies is—

Nowgong	19·46	Sibságar	8·51
Lakhimpur	13·88	Sylhet	6·52
Kámrúp	12·85	Cachar	4·13
Darrang	11·67		

For the whole Province the proportion is 8·49. It will be seen that, if Kámrúp, where the total immigrant population is only 1,385 persons, be excepted, the order of mortality remains the same as last year. The two lists only show a general agreement, so that the connection between the death-rate and the proportion of newly-imported to

seasoned immigrants is not very close. The former list shows a very great improvement in the health of all districts, and it is satisfactory to observe that the year under report is the healthiest of the four years 1877-80.

Mortality among adults by district and class.

53. As is customary, a statement is given, showing the mortality district by district, and separately for Act-VII. and non-Act coolies :—

District.	Number of deaths among						Percentage of deaths to annual strength.						Percentage of deaths to actual strength.					
	Act-VII.		Non-Act.		Total.		Act VII.		Non Act.		Total.		Act VII.		Non Act.		Total.	
	1880.	1879.	1880.	1879.	1880.	1879.	1880.	1879.	1880.	1879.	1880.	1879.	1880.	1879.	1880.	1879.	1880.	1879.
Nowgong	172	236	89	102	231	338	7·26	10·67	3·72	6·84	5·03	9·22	5·71	7·23	2·36	3·96	4·18	4·61
Darrang	389	603	149	265	538	868	7·72	11·22	2·78	5·31	5·17	8·44	5·88	8·53	2·03	3·8[illegible]	3·86	4·72
Lakhimpur	760	977	375	394	1,135	1,372	6·38	7·90	2·93	3·46	4·67	5·73	4·84	5·69	2·19	2·59	3·46	2·86
Kámrúp	9	15	31	21	40	36	3·55	6·11	4·[illegible]	3·26	4·18	4·15	3·07	4·93	3·56	2·26	3·44	2·07
Sibságar	903	1,059	677	702	1,580	1,761	4·97	7·29	3·28	3·[illegible]	3·9[illegible]	5·55	3·61	5·47	2·61	2·96	3·01	2·69
Cachar	387	729	510	1,154	897	1,880	5·24	7·14	1·72	3·46	2·42	4·67	3·69	4·72	1·15	2·48	1·68	2·32
Sylhet	78	148	211	297	289	440	3·92	5·68	1·50	3·05	2·13	3·63	2·81	4·31	1·30	2·29	1·53	1·85
Total	2,896	3,750	2,012	2,936	4,410	6,686	5·88	7·86	2·45	3·86	3·58	5·40	4·31	5·68	1·76	2·69	2·59	2·70

It will be seen that there has been high mortality among Act-VII. coolies in the districts of Darrang, Nowgong, Lakhimpur, Cachar, and Sibságar, but that in all districts the mortality amongst this class has much decreased. Among non-Act coolies the mortality is highest in Kámrup, where it has risen during the year under review, but in all other districts the mortality has fallen. The increase in the Kámrúp percentage is anomalous, but the number of immigrants, 1,385 persons, in that district is too small to found any conclusions on.

Causes of death among adults.

54. Two statements are given below, which show the causes of death among labourers engaged under Act VII. (B.C.) 1873, and those otherwise engaged, respectively:—

Causes of deaths among non-Act labourers.

District.	Mean strength of labourers employed in 1880.		Deaths from				Total of columns 3, 4, 5, and 6.			Annual percentage of deaths.
	First half.	Second half.	Cholera.	Dysentery.	Jungle fever.	Other causes.	First half.	Second half.	Total.	
1	2		3	4	5	6	7			8
Sylhet	11,321	11,816	20	51	39	101	86	125	211	1·80
Cachar	29,897	29,582	138	67	78	227	279	231	510	1·72
Kámrúp	690	712	....	2	7	22	10	21	31	4·38
Darrang	5,234	5,467	10	24	30	95	73	76	149	2·78
Nowgong	1,494	1,665	6	14	6	33	26	33	59	3·72
Sibságar	19,900	21,255	111	136	71	357	317	360	677	3·28
Lakhimpur	12,124	13,049	55	65	50	175	185	190	375	2·93
Total	80,461	83,546	370	361	271	1,010	976	1,036	2,012	2·46

Causes of deaths among labourers engaged under Act VII.

Sylhet	2,123	1,894	14	18	16	30	35	43	78	3·92
Cachar	8,004	6,831	67	115	46	159	194	193	387	5·24
Kámrúp	253	250	1	2	1	5	4	5	9	3·58
Darrang	5,197	4,927	55	88	31	215	152	237	389	7·73
Nowgong	2,369	2,371	22	43	15	92	56	116	172	7·25
Sibságar	12,888	11,656	93	185	39	286	228	368	603	4·97
Lakhimpur	11,836	11,278	156	166	68	370	334	426	760	6·58
Total	42,692	39,209	408	617	216	1,157	1,010	1,388	2,398	5·88

55. As in previous years, cholera and dysentery account for nearly half the deaths among Act-VII. coolies, but these diseases appear to have been less fatal among non-Act coolies.

Reasons for improved mortality.

The great improvement in the health of the labouring population shown by the returns of 1880 (which, as already noticed, is the year of least mortality since 1877) is due mainly to the absence of any severe epidemics of cholera or fever, but partly also to the smaller proportion of newly-introduced coolies, and partly to improvements effected in the sanitation of tea estates, more especially in the water-supply. Reduced prices, which enabled the labourers to obtain food more cheaply than in previous years, and the greater attention which has of late been given to the dieting of newly-imported coolies, who are most apt to suffer from a sudden change of food, have both no doubt contributed to this satisfactory result; but, as the vital statistics of the general population show a similar falling off in the mortality, it must be admitted that the healthiness of the year was not largely due to any causes affecting the immigrant population alone.

MORTALITY OF CHILDREN.

Statistics and mortality of children.

56. There were at the beginning of the year 41,161 children between the ages of 2 and 16 years. On the 1st July there were 43,157, and at the end of the year 43,163. The mean number of children for the first half year was therefore 42,159, and for the second half year 43,160. There were 493 deaths in the first half year and 475 in the second half year. The percentage of deaths to mean strength for the first half year was thus 1·16, and for the second half year 1·10, The mortality was thus slightly less in the second than in the first half of the year, while the reverse is the case with the adult population. The annual percentage of mortality among children is 2·26, as compared with 3·22 in 1879, which shows a very satisfactory improvement.

Causes of death among children.

57. A statement is given showing the causes of deaths among children:—

District.	Mean strength of children in 1880.		Deaths from				Total of columns 3, 4, 5, and 6.			Annual percentage of deaths.	Annual percentage of 1879.
	First half.	Second half.	Cholera.	Dysentery.	Jungle fever.	Other causes.	First half.	Second half.	Total.		
1	2		3	4	5	6	7			8	9
Sylhet	3,391	3,587	3	16	16	23	32	26	55	1·66	2·58
Cachar	19,449	19,599	32	85	75	112	195	109	304	1·55	1·92
Kámrúp	317	336	.....	.....	2	3	1	4	5	1·50	5·60
Darrang	2,098	2,122	10	8	12	42	29	43	72	3·40	6·67
Nowgong	1,047	1,132	2	4	5	13	7	17	24	2·16	5·94
Sibságar	9,294	9,633	24	82	76	103	114	171	285	2·99	4·37
Lakhimpur	6,561	6,750	31	54	34	101	115	105	220	3·30	4·29
Total	42,159	43,160	102	249	220	397	493	475	968	2·26	3·22

Every district shows an improvement on last year, but those in which it is more particularly marked are Kámrúp, Darrang, Nowgong, and Sibságar.

Statistics and mortality of infants.

58. There were at the beginning of the year 22,351 infants under two years of age; the number was 22,781 on the 1st July and 23,617 at the end of the year. Therefore the mean of the first half year was 22,566 and of the second half year 23,199. The mortality among infants in the first half year was 570 and in the second half year was 709. These figures yield percentages of 2·52 and 3·05 for the first and second half years, respectively, or a percentage of 5·57 for the whole year.

Causes of death among infants.

59. A table is given showing district by district the mortality among infants and the diseases from which death resulted. A comparison of this statement with the similar statement given at page 15, paragraph 23 of last year's report, shows that there has been a great decrease in infant mortality in all districts except Cachar and Kámrúp. The great improvement in Darrang, where the mortality fell from 10·64 to 4·32, and in Nowgong, where it fell from 15·98 to 5·73, is very satisfactory:—

Districts.	Mean strength of infants in 1880.		Deaths from				Total of cols. 3, 4, 5, and 6.			Annual percentage of deaths.	
	First half.	Second half.	Cholera.	Dysentery.	Jungle fever.	Other causes.	First half.	Second half.	Total.	1880.	1879.
1	2		3	4	5	6	7			8	9
Sylhet	1,778	1,929	1	10	19	33	22	41	63	3·35	6·87
Cachar	5,413	5,334	24	77	142	216	251	208	459	8·52	5·86
Kámrup	118	136	.....	.....	1	12	7	6	13	10·34	6·75
Darrang	1,712	1,857	2	26	.....	50	28	50	78	4·32	10·64
Nowgong	430	503	1	3	1	22	11	16	27	5·73	15·98
Sibságar	8,738	8,899	8	84	86	285	180	283	463	5·24	6·72
Lakhimpur	4,376	4,540	2	33	31	110	71	105	176	3·93	5·88
Total	22,566	23,199	38	233	280	728	570	709	1,279	5·57	6·79

Unhealthy gardens.

60. The tale of gardens which show an annual mortality exceeding 7·0 per cent. has somewhat diminished this year, except in Sibságar and Lakhimpur.

61. There are no such gardens in Sylhet and Kámrúp. In Cachar there were four such gardens last year, and this year there are two. Of the four unhealthy gardens of last year none re-appear in the list for the present year.

Sylhet, Cachar, and Kámrúp.

62. In Darrang there were eight gardens the annual mortality in which exceeded 7·0 per cent. Three of these re-appear in the list for the present year, and seven other gardens, which were not exceptionally unhealthy last year, have a mortality exceeding 7·0 per cent. this year. Such a statement is, however, in a manner misleading, as an examination of the table given at page 17 shows that the mortality on some of these gardens during 1880 was not really severe, except on four or at most five gardens, and that in the other cases the high percentage is due to a few deaths occurring among a small garden population.

Darrang.

63. In Nowgong there were three gardens with a mortality exceeding 7·0 per cent. last year, and only one of these gardens shows such a high mortality this year. There are, however, four other gardens with a high percentage of mortality in 1880 In regard to two of these gardens, the high percentage is due to a small number of deaths among a small garden population, and in only two is the mortality at all severe.

Nowgong.

64. In the district of Sibságar there were nine gardens with a mortality exceeding 7·0 per cent. in 1880. Only one of these was reported as specially unhealthy in 1879.

Sibságar.

65. In the Lakhimpur district there were twenty-two gardens with a mortality exceeding 7·0 per cent. in 1880, of which one only was reported as specially unhealthy in 1879. As regards the last two districts, the report furnished by the Officiating Inspector of Upper Assam does not give as full particulars as the Chief Commissioner would have wished.

Lakhimpur.

Section V.—Births.

66. There were 55,853 women at the beginning of the year, 57,335 on the 1st July and 55,664 at the close of the year. The mean of the year, therefore, was 56,617 women of all classes, Act-VII. and non-Act. The total number of births recorded is 5,904, which gives a percentage of 10 43 births to women. Last year the percentage of births to women was 8·82.

Mean strength of women.

67. Calculated, however, on the total immigrant population, the birth-rates fall very much lower. The statement below shows the births, annual strength of the immigrant population, and the percentage of the former to the latter for each district:—

Percentage of births to immigrant population

District.	Annual strength taken from statement at page 10.	Births	Percentage. 1880.	Percentage. 1879.
Sylhet	18,920	557	2 94	2 73
Cachar	61,805	2,111	3 41	2 80
Kámrup	1,406	53	3 76	1·63
Darrang	14,307	392	2 74	2 10
Nowgong	5 506	145	2 63	1 78
Sibságar	51,632	1,659	3 21	3·04
Lakhimpur	35,418	987	2 78	2 40
Total	188,497	5,904	3·13	2 70

68. There has, it will be observed, been a considerable increase in the recorded birth-rate, as compared with 1879. The birth-rate calculated on the total immigrant population is still low, *viz.*, 31·3 per mille, whereas, after making all allowances for the excess of males, it should probably be as much as 45 per mille, or nearly 50 per cent. larger than it is recorded to be. The deficiency may possibly be due in part to imperfect registration, and orders will again be issued directing special attention to the subject for the future.

Smallness of recorded birth-rate.

69. A statement is given showing by district and by nationality the mean number of women, the number of births, and the percentage of births to women. The highest recorded district birth-rate obtained in this manner is 12·28 in Cachar, and among the three classes which form the bulk of

Comparison of births to women by district and nationality.

the coolie population, *viz.*, Bengal, North-Western Provinces, and Chota Nagpur coolies, the birth-rates are 9·87, 10·76, and 10·77, respectively, which show a very small amount of variation:—

District.	Bengal.			N.-W. Provinces.			Chota Nagpur.			Nepal.			Bombay.			Madras.			Total.		
	Annual strength of women employed under Act VII. or otherwise.	Births.	Percentage.	Annual strength of women employed under Act VII. or otherwise.	Births.	Percentage.	Annual strength of women employed under Act VII. or otherwise.	Births.	Percentage.	Annual strength of women employed under Act VII. or otherwise.	Births.	Percentage.	Annual strength of women employed under Act VII. or otherwise.	Births.	Percentage.	Annual strength of women employed under Act VII. or otherwise.	Births.	Percentage.	Annual strength of women employed under Act VII. or otherwise.	Births.	Percentage.
Sylhet	2,256	189	8·38	2,472	226	9·22	1,554	135	8·68	2	...	....	3	..	..	76	7	9·21	6,363	557	8·75
Cachar	7,821	932	11·91	4,319	612	14·17	4,091	562	11·26	1	....	....	....	..	..	53	5	9·43	17,185	2,111	12·28
Kámrúp	360	30	12·00	9	....	....	156	17	10·89	....	....	....	....	..	..	....	..	....	467	53	11·35
Darrang	2,246	134	5·96	749	53	7·08	2,014	204	10·12	....	....	....	....	..	..	7	1	14·28	5,019	392	7·81
Nowgong	605	29	4·79	87	15	17·24	1,185	101	8·50	....	....	....	....	..	..	....	..	....	1,877	145	7·73
Sibsagar	4,790	506	10·56	1,961	168	8·56	8,384	981	11·70	2	1	50·00	....	..	..	104	3	2·88	15,243	1,659	10·88
Lakhimpur	2,105	162	7·69	664	30	4·52	7,602	789	10·37	....	....	....	2	..	..	89	6	6·74	10,463	987	9·43
Total	20,123	1,988	9·87	10,261	1,104	10·76	25,886	2,789	10·77	5	1	20·00	5	..	..	329	22	6·68	56,617	5,904	10·43

CHAPTER III.

DISTRICT DETAILS.

70. By the addition of a few statements in Chapter II. of this report which were not given last year in that chapter, nearly all the information which it has been customary to publish in this chapter regarding the special characteristics of the different districts has already been given. The only subject which requires to be dealt with a little more fully is that of the specially unhealthy gardens.

71. *Sylhet.*—On no gardens in the district of Sylhet did the annual percentage of mortality exceed 7·0 per cent.

72. *Cachar.*—Only two gardens in the district of Cachar had an annual mortality exceeding 7·0 per cent in 1880. In 1879 there were three such gardens, but none of these recur in the list for 1880. The two specially unhealthy gardens in 1880 are—

	Percentage on mean strength.	Mean strength.
Pathi Cherra	16·72	358
Mulidhar	7·86	254

If these percentages have been correctly calculated by the Deputy-Commissioner when submitting his report, there were 59 deaths on Pathi Cherra, and 19 deaths on Mulidhar. The attention of the Deputy-Commissioner has been drawn to the subject, and a special report will be called for regarding Pathi Cherra, where the rate is excessively high.

73. *Kámrúp.*—There were no specially unhealthy gardens in this district.

74. *Darrang.*—Eight gardens which exhibited a death-rate exceeding 7·0 per cent. in 1879 in Darrang are shown in the statement given below, which also shows their rate of mortality for this year; but five of them have greatly improved, and only three (Sadharu, Panbari, and Gellahating) continue to deserve a bad reputation in 1880:—

			1879.		1880.	
			First half.	Second half.	First half.	Second half.
Reported last year.	Darrang	Bongong	20·96	10·90		...
		Sadharu	15·35	11·55	2·30	5·57
		Panbari	16·15	9·16	6·71	3·64
		Atharikhat	3·86	13·99	1·36	5·28
		Balijura	6·72	11·42	1·48	3·96
		Partabgarh	...	10·09	1·48	3·96
		Gellahating	5·80	9·43	2·30	5·60
		Shadarughop	...	10·81	2·50	3·17

Besides these three gardens, seven others have fallen into the list in 1880, making ten unhealthy gardens in all; for these ten the following statement shows the

mean strength of the immigrants, and the number of deaths in each half-year, and the half-yearly and annual percentage for those gardens from which this information is available:—

Gardens.	Mean strength.		Deaths.		Percentages.		Annual.
	First half year.	Second half year.	First.	Second.	First.	Second.	
Sadharu	260	233	6	13	2 30	5·57	7 87
Panbari	134	137	9	5	6 71	3 64	10 35
Gellahating	383	373	9	21	2 3	5 6	7 9
Shakomotha	118	133	12	17	10·17	12 10	22 27
Teyial	38	31	3	2	7 89	6 45	14 34
Ghagrapara	71	61	5	3	7 04	4 91	11 95
Majbat	....	.....	.....	.....	.....	10 34	10 34
Kaupáti	68	71	5	2	7·34	2 81	10 15
Hathibari	.....	.....	.....	.....	1 49	7 24	8 73
Dhurumpily	43	39	2	1	4 65	2 56	7 21

75. Sadharu has much improved since 1879, and, though its rate of mortality is still high, the Chief Commissioner is hopeful that it may not again appear in the list of exceptionally unhealthy gardens. New wells have been sunk on this garden, and its sanitary condition has been much improved.

76. Panbari shows also a considerable improvement. Many sanitary improvements have been effected. The land round the lines has been cultivated, and a good pucka well has been sunk.

77. Gellahating also has improved. The garden is reported to be under good management, and everything that can be suggested has been done to render it more healthy. Many sanitary improvements have been recommended for Shakomotha, and it is hoped that when these are completed the health of this garden will much improve. Its great unhealthiness is unusual, but it will be carefully watched. Teyial and Ghagrapara have only a few coolies, and the number of deaths on these gardens is not excessive, nor does it point to any special unhealthiness.

78. In regard to Majbat, complete figures have not been reported; but it is said that there were only 13 Act-VII. coolies, of whom 1 died, and 16 non-Act coolies, of whom 2 died. The high rate of mortality on this garden does not prove its excessive unhealthiness.

The death-rate on Hathibari is given, but not the figures on which it is based, and the deaths may have been few and exceptional.

On Dhurumpily but few coolies are employed. There were only three deaths on this garden.

79. *Nowgong.*—The unhealthy gardens last year are shown in the following statement:—

	1879.		1880.	
	First	Second.	First	Second.
Borghat	.....	16 52	2 84	4 20
Sagmatti	9 00	10 96	1 07	4 90
Sagunbari	6 52	7 20	·99	1 56

Only one of these, *viz.*, Borghat, with a mortality of 7·04, is exceptionally unhealthy in 1880. Four other gardens are reported this year as having a mortality exceeding 7·0 per cent. A statement is given below showing the mean strengths and the deaths as far as these have been reported for these four gardens—

	Strength.		Deaths.		Percentages.		Annual
	First half year	Second half year.	First half year	Second half year.	First half year	Second half year	
Anjukpani	15	37	3	4	19 3	10 66	29 96
Rongamati	...	119	...	15	2 12	12 6	17·72
Sonajuri	...	36	...	4	2 32	11 11	13 43
Nonai	...	156	...	15	3 35	9 6	12 35

Notwithstanding the high percentages, on only two of these gardens has there been any very heavy mortality. The special attention of the Deputy-Commissioner will be again called to the importance of reporting very fully on all unhealthy gardens, both as to the conditions under which the mortality occurred, and as to the measures taken, or to be taken, to improve their condition; but no special orders are required regarding these gardens till their death-rate is reported for a second season. Meanwhile, they will be the objects of careful and special inspection.

80. *Sibságar.*—Nine gardens in Sibságar have been ascertained to have a mortality exceeding 7·0 per cent. in 1880. Full particulars of the number of coolies on these

gardens are not given by the Officiating Inspector of the Upper Assam Circle. The percentage of mortality on these gardens and the number of deaths are given below :—

Name of garden.	Number of deaths.	Percentage of deaths.
Teok	15	8·74
Dhunsiri	28	10·77
Hulwating	21	10·75
Bandasalia	14	10·33
Gabruparbat	43	9·53
Laojan	20	9·43
Moheima	19	9·41
Digotonga	43	7·98
Halika	22	7·18

Only one of these gardens was mentioned in last year's report as having been specially unhealthy in that year, *viz.*, Teok, the mortality on which has fallen from 12·28 to 8·74.

The high mortality on Laojan garden is attributed to the arrival of a batch of weakly coolies sent up in the years 1878 and 1879.

The manager of Hulwating garden attributes the high mortality on that garden to the same cause, and adds that he has been trying with some success the system of rationing newly-arrived immigrants.

81. *Lakhimpur.*—The original immigration report of the Upper Assam Circle contained no mention of any specially unhealthy gardens in Lakhimpur, but enquiry has elicited the fact that there are no less than 22 gardens in this district the mortality on which exceeded 7·0 per cent. during the year 1880. Only one of these was mentioned in the report last year as having been especially unhealthy in 1879, *viz.*, Seelonee. The mortality on this garden in the second half-year of 1879 was 39·21, and for the whole year was 45·66. During the present year the mortality has fallen to 10·39.

The following is a list of the gardens in Lakhimpur on which the mortality has exceeded 7·0 per cent. for the year 1880 :—

Names of gardens.	Number of deaths.	Percentage of deaths.
Seelonee	15	10·39
Jalukbari	20	44·29
Hulmany	44	13·97
Behating	22	12·97
Nohakottie	7	12·28
Kuddom	18	12·08
Hukanpukri	31	11·60
Timonah	12	11·29
Hukanjurie	5	11·03
Bolay	24	10·32
Beesakopie	67	9·90
Rungmulla	11	9·81
Romaria	51	8·95
Hurmutty	21	8·29
Doolabát	35	8·16
Bogparh	12	8·12
Eriabari	23	7·89
Kakojan	20	7·85
Burdoibam	9	7·46
Sessa	24	7·41
Sialkatty	11	7·09
Sessa	14	7·04

82. The rate of mortality on many of these gardens has been very high, and on some the number of deaths has been very large. The Chief Commissioner regrets that the Officiating Inspector of Labourers of Upper Assam should not have reported fully on each of the above gardens. Attention will at once be called to the matter, and Mr. Elliott hopes that the new arrangement he intends to introduce, by which the Immigration Reports for Sibságar and Lakhimpur will be prepared and submitted by the Deputy-Commissioners of those districts, will prevent the recurrence of a similar oversight in the submission of future reports. In both these districts the Deputy-Commissioners will be instructed to exercise special watchfulness over these gardens; and general directions will be issued to all Deputy-Commissioners that every garden which is named in this report as having been specially unhealthy in 1880 must be inspected at least twice, at the beginning and end of the cold season.

CHAPTER IV.

GENERAL REMARKS.

83. Forty-one new gardens were opened during the year, and 11 old ones were closed, making a net increase of 30 gardens. These figures, collected from the district reports, are unaccompanied by any explanations. A statement is given below, showing the new gardens opened and old gardens closed district by district. The largest number of new gardens opened has been in Sibságar, while the largest decrease is in Nowgong:—

Opening new gardens.

District	New gardens opened in 1880.	Old gardens closed in 1880.	REMARKS.
Sylhet	6	...	
Cachar	3	2	
Kámrúp	...	...	
Darrang	4	2	
Nowgong	...	7	Two old gardens abandoned and works of three gardens stopped.
Sibsagar	22	...	
Lakhimpur	6	...	
Total	41	11	

84. Only the offences of labourers on contract under Act VII. of 1873 (B.C.) are reported. The statement below shows district by district the number of Act-VII. labourers judicially punished, and the offences of which they were guilty:—

Offences of labourers

District.	Desertion.	Rioting	Theft.	Assault	Culpable homicide.	Counterfeiting coin.	House trespass.	Unlawful assembly.	Causing hurt	Other offences	Total.
Sylhet	18	....	....	1	....	....	....	....	....	...	19
Cachar	20	..	1	5	....	....	2	5	....	2	35
Kámrúp	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
Darrang	20	....	8	....	....	....	...	....	....	1	29
Nowgong	25	...	2	....	....	....	....	2	....	....	29
Sibsagar	16	2	8	2	....	....	....	....	....	3	31
Lakhimpur	29	....	1	3	....	...	...	....	1	1	35
Total	128	2	20	11	....	....	2	7	1	7	178

85. It will be seen that only 178 judicial punishments were inflicted on Act-VII. labourers in the whole Province during the year 1880, and out of these punishments 128 were for desertion. Considering that the annual mean strength, as is shown at page 10, was 40,950, this is a very small table of offences In regard to the small number of punishments for desertion, *viz.*, 128, and the large number of desertions *viz.*, 1,704, which took place, it would be desirable to know how many of the deserters were re-captured but not put on their trial, and how many escaped re-capture, and the Chief Commissioner will endeavour to obtain this information in future.

86. The following table shows the area of land taken up by time-expired immigrant labourers in the several districts of this Province during the last three years, so far as it can be ascertained. The figures now given for the year 1879 do not agree exactly with those given for that year in the last report. According to the present estimate, 2,658 acres were taken up for cultivation in 1879, and according to last year's report 2,457 acres were taken up. It is impossible to obtain precise information on this subject in all districts, and for the district of Sylhet no information has been furnished at all:—

Settlement within the Province.

Districts.	1880. Acres.	1879 Acres	Remarks.
Sylhet	.....	.....	Information not available.
Cachar	1,467	1,033	
Kámrúp	56	.....	
Darrang	1,254	756	
Nowgong	77	37	
Sibságar	990	832	
Lakhimpur	739·86	.....	
Total	4,583·86	2,658	

87. The amount of land taken up in 1880 by time-expired labourers was 4,583·86 acres, as compared with 2,658 acres in 1879, a very large advance, which shows an increase in the tendency on the part of time-expired labourers to settle down in this Province.

Sanitary improvements and dieting.

88. Continued attention has been paid to the subject of improving the sanitary condition of tea-gardens, and especially to the supply of pure drinking-water. A modified system of rationing newly-arrived coolies has been tried in some gardens in Sibságar with satisfactory results. The power which it is proposed in the draft Bill now under consideration to give Inspectors to enforce a system of rationing in the case of newly-arrived coolies, where the necessity for such a course is established, will probably be productive of much benefit. Under the present law it is difficult for a manager, even should he desire it, to carry out such a system successfully, opposed as it generally is to the wishes of the labourers. The proposed legislation will much strengthen the hands of managers in this respect. Rationing will probably always be unpopular with coolies, but it will enable many newly-imported immigrants to maintain their health during the first few months after their arrival, and it will form an incentive to the coolie to put himself into a position of independence of such assistance.

Conclusion.

89. The District Officers' reports show that the tea-labouring population is in a satisfactory and steadily improving condition. If importations have diminished in number they have improved in quality, and the labouring force has not only been maintained at its former strength, but has even slightly increased; desertions have largely decreased; the health of the labourers has much improved; the rate of mortality has fallen very considerably; and the recorded birth-rate has increased. Very few offences are recorded as having been committed by Act-VII. labourers, and more land than in former years has been taken up for cultivation in the Province by time-expired labourers. Owing to the continued depression of the tea industry, there have been but few new gardens opened out, but at the same time but few old gardens have been closed, and, on the whole, the tea industry is maintaining its ground.

RETURNS.

Return showing the Statistics for the Total Immigrant Population of the Province of Assam during the year 1880.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		9		10	11	12	13	14		15		16	17	
Classes of Labourers.	Number remaining at the end of last year, 1879.	Additions made during the year 1880.				Total of columns 3 and 7.	Deductions made during the year 1880.						Number remaining at the end of the year 1880.	Strength on the 1st July, 1880.	Percentage of deaths to		Percentage of desertions to		Actual strength (less received from other gardens).	Annual strength.	
		Imported.	Received from other gardens.	Otherwise added.	Total added.		Died. First half.	Died. Second half.	Deserted. First half.	Deserted. Second half.	Otherwise deducted.	Total deducted.			Actual strength (less received from other gardens).	Annual strength.	Actual strength (less received from other gardens).	Annual strength.		First half.	Second half.
Sylhet																					
Act-VII. labourers (adults)	2,169	568	65	31	664	2,833	35	43	97	72	875	1,122	1,711	2,078	2·21	3·02	6·15	8·36	2,768	2,123	1,834
Non-Act labourers — Adults	10,993*	485	1,484	4,668	6,637	17,630	86	123	818	419	4,198	5,646	11,984	11,649	1·30	1·80	7·66	10·76	16,146	11,321	11,816
Non-Act labourers — Children	3,281	179	342	733	1,248	4,529	32	26	157	65	595	855	3,674	3,501	1·28	1·66	4·82	6·85	4,187	3,391	3,587
Non-Act labourers — Infants	1,695	37	114	721	872	2,567	22	41	33	30	445	571	1,996	1,862	2·36	3·35	2·35	3·40	2,458	1,778	1,929
Total	18,138	1,268	2,005	6,153	9,421	27,559	175	235	1,085	586	6,112	8,194	19,365	19,090	1·60	2·16	6·22	8·86	26,554	18,614	19,227
Cachar																					
Act-VII. labourers (adults)	8,871	1,526	61	93	1,680	10,551	194	192	290	248	3,134	4,058	6,525	7,138	2·68	5·24	4·81	6·76	10,490	8,004	6,831
Non-Act labourers — Adults	28,895	411	1,768	14,974	17,153	46,048	279	231	667	252	15,233	16,782	29,266	29,520	1·15	1·72	2·30	3·44	44,280	29,297	29,582
Non-Act labourers — Children	19,190	456	167	3,743	4,366	23,556	195	109	86	50	2,626	4,066	19,040	19,708	1·29	1·55	0·58	0·62	23,389	19,449	19,099
Non-Act labourers — Infants	5,591	116	57	2,643	2,816	8,407	251	208	76	40	2,399	2,974	5,433	5,233	5·49	8·32	1·38	2·14	8,350	5,418	5,384
Total	62,547	2,509	2,053	21,453	26,015	88,562	919	741	1,119	657	24,412	27,848	60,714	61,980	1·91	2·67	2·05	2·86	86,509	62,263	61,347
Kámrúp																					
Act-VII. labourers (adults)	249	48	2	....	50	295	4	5	....	....	48	57	238	262	3·07	3·58	.....	.....	293	253	250
Non-Act labourers — Adults	637	68	18	164	250	887	10	21	....	15	161	207	680	744	3·56	4·28	1·72	2·10	869	699	712
Non-Act labourers — Children	295	43	4	26	73	368	1	4	....	....	32	37	331	340	1·37	1·50	.....	.....	364	317	335
Non-Act labourers — Infants	100	19	3	54	76	176	7	6	....	....	27	40	136	136	7·31	10·84	.....	.....	173	118	138
Total	1,277	178	27	244	449	1,726	22	36	....	15	268	341	1,385	1,482	3·41	4·10	0·88	1·04	1,659	1,379	1,435
Darrang																					
Act-VII. labourers (adults)	5,226	1,315	54	65	1,434	6,660	152	237	74	72	1,438	1,973	4,687	5,168	5·88	7·73	2·22	2·88	6,606	5,197	4,927
Non-Act labourers — Adults	5,024	60	285	2,245	2,590	7,624	73	76	35	56	1,885	2,125	5,499	5,435	2·03	2·78	1·93	1·68	7,349	5,234	5,467
Non-Act labourers — Children	2,067	178	51	292	521	2,588	29	43	5	2	395	474	2,114	2,130	2·83	3·40	2·78	0·32	2,537	2,098	2,122
Non-Act labourers — Infants	1,655	119	16	498	624	2,279	28	50	3	....	254	335	1,944	1,770	3·44	4·32	1·32	0·17	2,263	1,712	1,857
Total	13,982	1,663	406	3,100	5,169	19,151	282	406	117	130	3,972	4,907	14,244	14,503	3·67	4·81	1·31	1·72	18,745	14,242	14,373
Nowgong																					
Act-VII. labourers (adults)	2,282	652	143	76	871	3,153	56	116	101	65	529	867	2,286	2,456	5·71	7·25	5·31	7·00	3,010	2,369	2,371
Non-Act labourers — Adults	1,372	185	117	942	1,244	2,616	26	33	19	24	799	901	1,715	1,616	2·36	3·72	1·72	2·71	2,459	1,424	1,665
Non-Act labourers — Children	977	164	80	199	443	1,420	7	17	9	....	229*	272	1,148	1,117	1·19	2·16	6·71	0·85	1,340	1,047	1,132
Non-Act labourers — Infants	357	101	21	145	267	624	11	16	....	....	94	121	513	493	4·40	5·73	.....	.....	613	430	503
Total	4,998	1,102	361	1,362	2,825	7,823	100	182	129	89	1,661	2,161	5,662	5,682	3·77	5·07	2·92	3·97	7,462	5,340	5,672
Sibságar																					
Act-VII. labourers (adults)	13,583	3,042	210	45	3,297	16,880	235	388	192	172	4,795	5,762	11,118	12,194	3·61	4·97	2·18	2·95	16,670	12,888	11,636
Non-Act labourers — Adults	18,557	535	938	6,809	8,282	26,839	317	360	125	149	4,810	5,571	21,268	21,243	2·61	3·18	1·09	1·37	23,201	19,809	21,255
Non-Act labourers — Children	9,097	484	215	1,526	2,225	11,232	114	171	13	9	1,240	1,547	9,685	9,582	2·18	2·99	0·13	0·22	11,017	9,294	9,633
Non-Act labourers — Infants	8,596	276	90	1,884	2,250	10,846	180	283	8	3	1,453	1,927	8,919	8,880	4·20	5·24	0·10	0·12	10,756	8,498	8,899
Total	49,743	4,337	1,453	10,264	16,054	65,797	846	1,182	348	333	12,098	14,807	50,990	51,899	3·15	3·96	1·05	1·35	64,244	50,821	51,444
Lakhimpur																					
Act-VII. labourers (adults)	11,993	3,644	294	57	3,995	15,991	334	426	176	178	4,037	5,151	10,840	11,747	4·84	6·28	2·25	3·06	13,697	11,854	11,278
Non-Act labourers — Adults	11,453	302	238	5,331	5,869	17,322	189	190	104	83	4,087	4,619	12,703	13,396	2·19	2·93	0·91	1·28	17,086	12,424	13,049
Non-Act labourers — Children	6,244	723	61	994	1,786	8,130	115	105	14	7	1,168	1,409	6,721	6,779	2·72	3·39	0·26	0·31	8,059	6,561	6,750
Non-Act labourers — Infants	4,317	184	9	1,188	1,381	5,728	71	105	2	....	874	1,052	4,676	4,405	3·07	3·92	0·03	0·04	5,712	4,376	4,540
Total	34,140	4,861	600	7,570	13,031	47,171	705	826	296	238	10,166	12,231	34,940	36,297	2·28	4·32	1·14	1·31	46,571	35,218	35,618
Total																					
Act-VII. labourers (adults)	44,372	10,795	829	367	11,991	56,363	1,010	1,388	939	774	14,856	18,958	37,405	41,013	4·31	5·83	3·06	4·14	55,534	42,632	39,309
Non-Act labourers — Adults	76,941	2,046	4,846	35,153	42,025	118,966	976	1,036	1,778	1,068	30,993	35,851	83,115	83,982	1·76	2·45	2·49	2·48	114,120	80,461	82,548
Non-Act labourers — Children	41,161	2,229	920	7,812	10,662	51,823	452	475	264	183	7,295	8,660	43,163	43,157	1·00	2·26	0·77	0·92	50,902	42,159	42,160
Non-Act labourers — Infants	22,251	843	310	7,133	8,286	30,637	570	709	122	78	5,546	7,020	23,617	22,781	4·22	5·57	0·64	0·85	30,327	22,566	22,199
Grand Total	184,825	15,913	6,905	50,146	72,964	257,789	3,049	3,608	3,094	2,048	58,690	70,489	187,300	190,933	2·65	3·62	2·05	2·72	250,884	187,879	189,116

The discrepancy with Column 12 of last year's return is owing to some tea gardens in Sylhet which did not submit returns last year having submitted returns this year and *vice versa*.

Divisional Return No. 25 of 1880.

Return of Imported Labourers on Contracts under Act VII. (B.C.) of 1873, for the year ending 31st December 1880.

Sex.	Locality of Birthplace.	Number remaining on the books at the end of last year, 1879.	Number placed on the books during the year 1880. Imported. By contractors.	By garden-sirdars.	Received from other gardens.	Returned from imprisonment.	Apprehended as deserters.	Total added during the year, or total of columns 4 to 8.	Total number of labourers, or total of columns 3 and 9.	Number removed from the books during the year 1880. Transferred to other gardens.	By permanent unfitness under Section 112.	By determination of contract under Section 126.	By redemption under section 137.	By cancelment under Sections 135 and 124.	Died. First half.	Second half.	Imprisoned.	Deserted. First half.	Second half.	Total deducted during the year 1880, or total of columns 11 to 18.	Number remaining on the books at the end of the year 1880.	Strength on the 1st July 1880.	Annual strength. First half.	Second half.	Actual strength.	Percentage of deaths to Annual strength.	Actual strength.	Percentage of desertions to Annual strength.	Actual strength.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16		17	18		19	20	21	22		23	24	25	26	27
Men	(1) Bengal	5,029*	681	487	108	12	31	1,326	6,355	108	19	1,453	2	19	82	115	13	117	160	2,090	4,265	4,546	4,772	4,390	6,247	4·32	3·16	6·09	4·43
	(2) N.-W. Provinces, Oudh, and Behar	4,332	613	667	51	41	34	1,406	5,738	49	18	1,366	12	8	139	174	48	228	223	2,267	3,471	3,853	4,092	3,662	5,637	8·14	5·50	11·71	7·96
	(3) Chota Nagpur and Southalia	14,470	842	3,080	306	69	78	4,375	18,845	301	39	4,487	17	5	324	414	94	251	231	6,263	12,582	13,828	14,149	13,905	18,359	5·41	3·98	4·22	3·13
	(4) Nepal	6	10	3	....	....	....	13	19	....	....	6	....	....	....	4	....	1	1	12	7	14	10	10	19	10·00	21·05	20·00	10·52
	(5) Madras	341	17	1	27	....	1	46	387	27	2	241	1	....	7	7	2	5	8	298	89	218	279	153	366	7·07	3·28	6·29	3·05
	(6) Bombay	25	.....	.....	....	....	....	....	25	....	....	22	....	....	2	....	....	....	....	25	....	12	18	6	24	11·11	8·00	....	....
	Total	24,203	2,163	4,238	492	129	144	7,166	31,369	485	78	7,578	32	32	554	714	157	700	623	10,955	20,414	22,441	23,322	21,437	30,877	5·70	4·19	5·91	4·23
Women	(1) Bengal	5,243	354	434	68	5	23	1,084	6,327	69	10	1,609	5	13	98	144	3	54	41	2,046	4,281	4,582	4,916	4,420	6,279	4·23	3·16	2·01	1·51
	(2) N.-W. Provinces, Oudh, and Behar	3,285	234	505	24	7	12	782	4,067	25	11	1,124	4	4	78	127	2	78	57	1,510	2,557	2,828	3,056	2,692	4,047	7·26	5·06	4·70	3·13
	(3) Chota-Nagpur and Southalia	11,463	455	2,537	223	12	33	2,940	14,403	246	37	3,187	22	2	276	400	16	98	51	4,320	10,109	11,021	11,247	10,56[illegible]	14,179	6·22	4·79	1·35	1·05
	(4) Nepal	....	.....	.....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
	(5) Madras	166	5	.....	12	2	....	19	185	12	1	112	....	....	4	3	....	....	....	132	53	121	143	87	170	6·22	4·94	....	....
	(6) Bombay	12	.....	.....	....	....	....	....	12	....	....	12	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	12	....	2	7	1	12	....	....	....	....
	Total	20,169	1,318	3,176	337	26	68	4,825	24,994	379	59	6,045	31	19	456	674	21	230	149	8,060	17,291	18,572	19,370	17,780	24,647	6·14	4·58	2·01	1·54
	Grand Total	44,372	3,481	7,414	829	155	212	11,991	56,363	807	137	13,623	63	51	1,010	1,388	178	930	774	18,929	37,705	41,013	42,692	39,217	55,524	6·89	4·31	4·14	3·06

* The discrepancy with column 3 of the previous year's return is owing to managers of Sreebozpur, Allnagar, and Chettipur in Cachar, having rectified their mistakes in last year's return.

Divisional Return No 26 of 1880.

Return of Imported Labourers not on Contracts under Act VII. (B.C.) of 1873 for the year ending the 31st December 1880.

Age.	Sex.	Locality of Birthplace.	Number remaining at the end of last year, 1879.	Additions during the year 1880.						Total of columns 4 and 10.	Deductions during the year 1880.								Number remaining at the end of year 1 80.	Strength on the 1st July 1880.	Annual strength.		Actual strength.	Percentage of deaths to		Percentage of desertions to	
				Imported direct.	Otherwise than by importation.			By transfer to adults from minors and to minors from infants.	Total added during the year 1880, or total of columns 5 to 9.		Transferred to other gardens.	Left the garden with permission.	Left the garden without permission.		Died.		By transfer from minors to adults and from infants to minors.	Total deducted during the year 1880, or total of columns 12 to 16.			First half.	Second half.		Annual strength.	Actual strength.	Annual strength.	Actual strength.
					Received from other gardens.	Re-engaged on expiry of contract.	Otherwise obtained.						First half.	Second half.	First half.	Second half.											
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		15		16	17	18	19	20		21	22	23	24	25
Adults	Men	(1) Bengal	16,824*	320	919	5,244	1,298	269	8,050	24,874	644	6,004	323	234	128	130	....	7,463	17,411	18,057	17,430	17,724	23,855	1·46	1·67	3·11	2·32
		(2) N.-W. Provinces, Oudh, and Behar.	8,722	276	879	3,224	1,084	191	5,654	14,376	558	3,537	489	232	173	157	....	5,166	9,210	9,234	8,978	9,222	13,497	3·62	2·44	7·95	5·24
		(3) Chota Nagpur and Sonthalia.	15,090	502	879	6,165	1,676	409	9,631	24,721	790	5,532	295	214	246	210	....	7,287	17,434	17,599	16,344	17,516	23,842	2·69	1·91	3·02	2·13
		(4) Nepal	39	.....	3	3	3	....	9	48	....	25	3	1	1	....	....	30	18	27	32	22	45	3·03	2·22	13·63	8·88
		(5) Madras	303	3	17	199	25	1	245	548	9	120	29	5	5	14	....	182	366	319	211	342	531	5·69	3·53	10·78	6·40
		(6) Bombay	....	....	....	6	....	....	6	6	....	1	....	2	....	....	....	3	3	3	1	3	6	.....	....	66·66	33·33
		Total	40,978	1,101	2,697	14,841	4,086	870	23,595	64,573	2,001	15,239	1,139	688	553	511	....	20,131	44,442	45,219	43,098	44,830	61,876	2·41	1·71	4·17	2·95

	Women	(1) Bengal	15,281	249	886	3,980	1,227	263	6,605	21,886	620	5,360	204	117	119	175	....	6,555	15,291	15,605	15,443	15,448	21,000	1·90	1·40	2·97	1·83
		(2) N.-W. Provinces, Oudh, and Behar.	6,974	228	576	2,383	730	207	4,124	11,098	367	2,502	262	144	106	132	....	3,513	7,585	7,505	7,239	7,545	10,522	3·20	2·26	5·81	3·65
		(3) Chota Nagpur and Sonthalia.	13,488	463	677	4,877	1,166	382	7,565	21,053	597	4,224	154	113	197	212	....	5,497	15,556	15,436	14,462	15,496	20,276	2·72	2·00	1·78	1·31
		(4) Nepal	11	....	1	1	1	....	3	14	....	6	1	....	1	....	....	8	6	5	8	5	12	12·50	7·69	12·50	7·69
		(5) Madras	209	....	9	101	14	....	129	338	9	68	18	4	....	6	....	105	233	211	210	222	329	2·70	1·82	10·37	6·68
		(6) Bombay	....	....	....	4	....	....	4	4	....	....	....	2	...	....	....	2	2	1	....	1	4	...,	....	200·00	50·00
		Total	35,963	945	2,149	11,346	3,138	852	18,430	54,393	1,593	12,160	639	380	423	525	....	15,720	38,673	38,763	37,363	38,718	52,244	2·48	1·81	2·60	1·95
		Total Adults	76,941	2,046	4,846	26,187	7,224	1,722	42,025	118,966	3,594	27,399	1,778	1,068	976	1,026	....	35,851	83,115	83,982	80,461	83,548	114,120	2·45	1·76	3·48	2·49
Minors under 16 years, excluding infants under 2 years.	Boys	....	23,265	1,228	544	1,558	1,292	1,340	5,962	29,227	386	2,102	153	88	261	257	870	4,728	24,499	24,416	23,840	24,457	28,628	2·18	1·84	1·09	·84
	Girls	....	17,896	1,001	376	1,033	1,103	1,187	4,700	22,596	254	2,231	111	44	232	208	852	3,932	18,664	18,741	18,318	18,702	22,220	2·37	1·98	·83	·69
		Total	41,161	2,229	920	2,591	2,395	2,527	10,662	51,823	640	4,333	264	132	493	475	1,722	8,660	43,163	43,157	42,158	43,160	50,902	2·26	1·96	·92	·77
		Grand Total	118,102	4,275	5,766	28,778	9,619	4,249	52,687	170,789	4,234	32,332	2,042	1,201	1,469	1,511	1,722	44,511	126,278	127,139	122,620	126,708	165,023	2·38	1·89	2·61	1·96

* The discrepancy with column 18 of the previous year's return is owing to some tea-gardens which did not submit returns last year having submitted returns this year, and *vice versa*.